

**ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABLE  
BEST PRACTICE MATERIALS  
AND  
SUMMARY OF THE  
DISSEMINATION COMPONENT OF  
THE  
PILOT LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

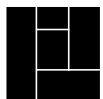
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# ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABLE BEST PRACTICE MATERIALS AND SUMMARY OF THE DISSEMINATION COMPONENT OF THE PILOT LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

## INTRODUCTION

The dissemination aspect of any advisory program is very important since it can greatly increase the impact of the project and multiply its effects. Promoting positive results and showing methods from technical assistance programs may encourage other local officials to introduce similar reforms and initiate change. However, any transfer of information and knowledge requires a strategy and will not happen only as a result of technical assistance activities. A dissemination strategy should lay groundwork for further replication across the country. Promoting innovative practices and 'lessons learned' from pilot or demonstration programs can also have the quality of being able to "...demonstrate the effectiveness of reform when pure theory fails to convince national leaders"<sup>1</sup>

USAID's overall strategic objective for the Pilot LGPP was *to help Polish local governments become more effective, responsible, and accountable*. By using this guiding principle the Pilot LGPP staff formulated a dissemination strategy. The staff placed an emphasis on using established approaches to dissemination capable of replicating and expanding successful demonstrations and developing products that are useful to Polish local government officials, and ultimately beneficial to the public at large.

The overall goal of the dissemination component of the program was to 'distribute materials and information based on experiences derived from technical assistance activities conducted as part of the Pilot LGPP supplemented with information from other local government experiences in Poland and elsewhere.'<sup>2</sup> This goal helped set the stage for our dissemination strategy so that it could clearly and forcefully be presented to the officials from our pilot gminas and ultimately distributed to others interested in reform of local governments.<sup>3</sup>

## RATIONALE FOR PILOT LGPP DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

There is a wide range of methods to disseminate information of which the most commonly used are the following: mass distribution of brochures, pamphlets and other printing materials, participation in and organization of workshops and conferences (sponsoring and co-sponsoring workshops with local counterparts), publishing newspaper articles, producing TV programs, educational and promotional films. 'Advertising' and 'informing' constitute an integral part of any technical assistance program. Methods employed to disseminate information depend upon the goals and objectives of the larger program. The

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<sup>1</sup> Struyk, Raymond J. 1997. *Making Aid Work. Lessons from Successful Technical Cooperation in the Former Soviet Block*. The Urban University Press. Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup> *Operating Strategy. Urban Institute Consortium Support for USAID/Poland Local Governance Initiative*. October 1996.

<sup>3</sup> *Operating Strategy. Urban Institute Consortium Support for USAID/Poland Local Governance Initiative*. October 1996.

rational behind the Pilot LGPP dissemination strategy was to reach a wide local government audience with the greatest impact.

In developing the strategic framework for the dissemination component we assessed: the scope of technical assistance activities, technical assistance provider's perspective on dissemination, local governments' interests and needs, local governments' perspective on dissemination, and dissemination methods currently in use. Learning about innovative practices implemented in other gminas puts pressure on local officials to introduce similar innovations in their municipalities. Sometimes demand by citizens for change also places pressure on local officials to initiate change.

Though Poland does not lack its own innovations among local governments, we chose to promote innovative practices that are found in other transition countries, believing that learning about their 'successes' enriches knowledge of local level reforms and provides additional motivation to promote change. Many Polish local governments cooperate and consult with local authorities from other former communist countries. Therefore, supplementary information about local level reforms in these countries should help them better understand reforms.

In addition, we placed an emphasis on selecting information that described positive practices from technical assistance which might be replicated in other gminas. Our criteria for selecting activities for dissemination was driven by one overriding factor; technical assistance should motivate others to undertake similar changes. Thus, our dissemination strategy should conform to successful experiences elsewhere given that if any technical assistance program is well marketed then the demand for innovative practices increases.

## PILOT LGPP APPROACH TO DISSEMINATION

The dissemination strategy of the Pilot LGPP included several different approaches. Print media is the most popular way of disseminating information such as well-documented case studies and descriptions of tools and methodologies to address reform of local government. The Pilot LGPP approach to dissemination relied heavily on print media. Secondly, we chose to provide a forum for local government officials and consultants to interact on a personal level through the use of workshops and conferences as a way to disseminate information. Lastly, we used visual communication to inform gminas about different technical assistance activities taking place in other gminas. By using three approaches to disseminate information we hoped to obtain the goal of the dissemination component of the Pilot LGPP.

As part of dissemination using print media, we entered into a cooperative agreement with the largest source of information for Polish gminas—*Municipium*. With their assistance we published two collections of innovative local government practices; one publication focused on Polish examples while the second publication focused on innovative practices derived from other Central and Eastern European countries.

We also chose to use the print media to distribute information about topics of interest to officials from our Pilot LGPP gminas. For this purpose, we collaborated with *Municipium's* popular local government weekly—*Wspólnota*—to publish eight articles on important reform issues. The first series of articles focused on consulting, the second series of articles promoted innovative municipal finance methods using USAID-



sponsored Gmina Financial Analysis model, and the third one introduced interesting innovative practices which could serve as models to be replicated in other gminas.

By using our own in-house capacity we were able to publish a monthly Pilot LGPP Newsletter. These newsletters kept gminas and consultants updated on Pilot LGPP assistance activities and gave them a sense of being part of something larger than the technical assistance activities in their immediate environment. For example, in one our Newsletters we described the tools developed to promote economic development and then showed the results from implementing these tools in select Pilot gminas.

Our second approach to dissemination, the Pilot LGPP staff used conferences and workshops as a way to inform and teach local government officials about innovative practices. The Pilot LGPP organized and co-sponsored twelve conferences and workshops, focusing on key technical assistance efforts carried out as part of the Pilot project. These face-to-face meetings of gmina officials and consultants were an effective means of sharing information and allowing interaction to take place among the consultants and their clients.

Thirdly, we produced a video that highlighted one of our most effective technical assistance activities—developing a local government communication strategy. This video titled “Communication is Everything” was based on our accomplishments in Gliwice with assisting them to develop a communication strategy. We believed that Gliwice’s effort to develop a communication strategy—initiated before it became a pilot city—constitutes a model for other gminas on how to communicate successfully with their citizens. Further, this technical assistance activity cuts across the other technical assistance activities undertaken by the Pilot LGPP.

## IMPACT

The Pilot LGPP dissemination effort was based on the principle that *information is an asset but only when used and disseminated, and the wider the audience the greater the impact*. Our strategy was designed to effectively communicate new information, tools, procedures, and processes. In implementing our strategy we were committed to:

- Presenting information in clear and understandable manner;
- Using dissemination approaches that were cost effective but still reach the widest audience; and
- Choosing information for dissemination based on our gminas' needs.

Throughout the pilot stage of the LGPP we attempted to anticipate our audience's needs and design our strategies so we could meet those needs. Over the course of the program our knowledge about local government affairs expanded and improved our understanding of local governance. For example, the experience gathered in the Pilot LGPP helped us enhance consulting methods by basing them on partnerships and collaboration. Therefore we chose to promote this activity. Our experience also helped us chose topics for dissemination based on demand by gmina officials.

## PRODUCTS

### *Print Media*

■ **Local Government Innovative Practices Guide** published as part of the Pilot LGPP dissemination effort by MUNICIPIUM, Warsaw 1997 (Originally prepared by ICMA under USAID sponsorship)

USAID funded the Guide's preparation in order to document numerous successful practices implemented in Central and Eastern Europe. Many local governments in this region have ceased to be passive implementers of central government policies and have begun an active search for solutions to local problems. "Local Government Innovative Practices Guide" presents a wide variety of municipal initiatives in the following areas: municipal credit, economic development and planning, municipal association development, citizen participation in municipal decision-making, urban service delivery, environmental management, local revenue generation, budgeting and financial management, the role of municipality in housing, and national initiatives to build local capacity. The Guide is divided into sections corresponding to the above mentioned areas. Descriptions of each innovative practice contain important background information, the implementation process, results, and contact persons.

■ **Innovative Practices Guide - Five Case Studies, Poland** prepared by *Biuro Rozwoju* for the Pilot LGPP and published by Municipium, Warsaw 1997.

Our second guide presented five case studies about Polish innovations and was developed as a supplement to the Compendium on innovative practices from other Central and East European countries. The pilot LGPP contracted with the consulting company, *Biuro Rozwoju*, to document innovative cases that



correspond to the program's strategy modules and could be reproduced in other gminas. The Polish collection presents five case studies about 'different ways of thinking' and the innovative undertakings of five gminas facing new challenges resulting from economic transition. The Polish collection includes the following cases: 1) co-operation of NGOs with local authorities in the municipality of Gdańsk, 2) implementation of the 'Safe City' Program in Gdynia, 3) utilization of the Teutonic Castle to fight unemployment, 4) creation of a development strategy for the rural gmina of Kaliska, and 5) use of municipal bonds as an instrument for financing city transportation in Gdynia.

The case on *cooperation of non-governmental organizations with the city authorities in Gdańsk* presents a well designed project developed by the Regional Center for Information and Assistance to NGOs for bringing NGOs and the public sector together. The project increased NGOs effectiveness in the region and created clear rules of cooperation with the public sector. NGOs in Gdańsk are very active and cover almost all areas of social life. The case study presents all stages of the project implementation in great detail. It describes main assumptions behind NGO-gmina cooperation, conditions necessary for successful cooperation, and all parties who were involved in the process. It provides the following tools: rules of cooperation, regulations for providing financial assistance to NGOs from the city budget, a model agreement and application form for financial support for a project.

■ **The 'Safe City' Program** shows how Gdynia reduced crime, improved citizens' safety, and strengthened social bonds in local communities. This safety program was based on experience from both the National Police Headquarters in Warsaw and Western experience (mainly Dutch). Emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen citizens' responsibility for themselves and their own safety. The program advocated involvement in preventive activities of all institutions which are part of the social safety system such as: the police, city guard, fire department, and other rescue services. It also stressed the importance of close and on-going cooperation between the police, citizens, city institutions, enterprises and other organizations. This case study presents a model for other gminas for establishing effective and on-going cooperation among city institutions by defining priorities through opinion polls, developing a map of needs and guidelines for actions.

■ **The case on "Utilization of the Teutonic Knights' Castle in Gniew"** describes how the local government uses its attractive natural and cultural environment to create new jobs and revitalize the city. In the beginning of the 90s, Gniew had a high structural unemployment reaching 35% of the city working population. City authorities reduced unemployment by taking advantage of state regulations concerning municipalities with high structural unemployment. Officials applied for labor fund resources for public and subsidiary works and used them at the renovation of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Teutonic Knights' Castle and other historical sites. Reconstruction created new work places for unemployed and gave many of them the opportunity to acquire new skills. Furthermore, the reconstructed and 'operating' castle created additional work places by hosting many successful events in the city such as: Medieval Days, festivals, artistic shows, etc. During the last five years Gniew's has become a very attractive tourist sight. Its hotel and museum is visited by thousands of people every year.

■ **A description of the process of designing a development strategy for the village gmina of Kaliska** presents well organized and highly professional cooperation among local authorities and numerous consulting firms in redefining the gmina's character. The strategy emphasized the importance of citizen

participation in the gmina's development. In the strategy development process local authorities defined the gmina's development objectives. Those were divided into *primary objectives*, *objectives in strategic areas* (industry, agriculture, tourism), and *objectives in strategic problems* (external investments, extension of infrastructure and creation of new work places). The strategy suggested several alternative ways of meeting these objectives such as: communalization of less attractive land for investments, elaboration of the gmina's investment offers, and publication of tourism brochures promoting the region.

■ **“Municipal bonds as an instrument for financing city transportation fleet in Gdynia”** discusses the restructuring and commercialization of mass transportation. Under new regulations, mass transportation became one of the municipal responsibility. The city decided that the new mechanism of the functioning of city transportation services should be shaped on market forces, though the city would still subsidize it. City transportation organizer and service provider were separated and the bid for financing the purchase of new busses was organized. Before the city decided to issue municipal bonds to finance bus contracts, it made an extensive search of different terms for financing through loans in Polish zloty, loans in foreign currency, and other subsidized foreign loans. An ‘innovative’ approach of Gdynia to the problem of getting resources was to look for capital outside the traditional offers from the banking sector. In the process of evaluating offers concerning municipal bonds gmina learned not only about the tools available but also the capital market dynamics.

The Compendium of innovative practices and collection of Polish case studies was published and distributed by MUNICIPIUM. These have been distributed to gminas, consulting companies and other research institutions which show interest in the subject matter and would like to use them in their work.

In addition to publishing books and other materials, MUNICIPIUM publishes the most popular weekly magazine *Wspólnota* (18,000 copies) which reaches practically every gmina in Poland. The Pilot LGPP dissemination strategy included using *Wspólnota* to disseminate information and raise interest in the process of providing technical assistance in the pilot gminas. The topics published in the series of articles were: “*Making consulting for gminas more effective*”, “*Methods of collaboration and different consulting styles*”, “*Necessary elements of effective consulting*”, “*Experiences of pilot gminas and consultants working in the Pilot LGPP*”, and the “*Gmina Financial Analysis Model*.”

The series of articles on consulting followed a workshop in Zakopane and focused on the process of consulting and cooperation between consultants and municipalities. The major goal of the series was to present some general recommendations for both gminas and consultants who are working together. The articles presented and explained the concept of ‘consulting’ and stressed the need for establishing ‘cooperation’ principles between gmina and consultants. The following elements of the consulting process were analyzed: psychological aspects of consultancy, the scope and different styles of consulting, positive and negative experiences of pilot gminas and consultants, and the necessary elements of effective consulting and cooperation between the providers and recipients of technical assistance. We devoted one column in *Wspólnota* to present one of the best infrastructure finance and development instruments, *Gmina Financial Analysis model* (GFAM), which was developed and implemented in several Polish municipalities by Chris Kaczmarek and Wojciech Deska from the Research Triangle Institute (RTI).



■ **Publishing monthly *Pilot LGPP Newsletter*.** The Newsletter helped facilitate an exchange of information among all parties involved in providing and receiving technical assistance in the course of the program. Through our newsletter we kept readers informed about current and upcoming events and tried to encourage a transfer of information between consultants and gminas. The newsletter presented experiences of the Pilot gminas and consultants, and discussed successful methodologies and processes developed in the key areas of technical assistance. We encouraged all Newsletter recipients (both consultants and local government representatives) to share their comments and suggestions with the coordinating office and each other. We have received critical comments and positive feedback on our Newsletter and hope that the idea will be continued with the expansion of the LGPP. The demand for information will increase substantially as the program grows. Therefore, we advise the larger LGPP dissemination staff to continue issuing a newsletter-type publication as an efficient means of sharing experiences and maintaining communication.

Our six newsletters focused on:

- **Newsletter No 1.** Introduction of the program, presentation of pilot gminas and areas of technical assistance.
- **Newsletter No 2.** Major tools developed in the Pilot program such as: Gmina Financial Analysis Model, Capital Investment Planning Model, Enterprise Financial Condition Model, and results of the Zakopane workshop on consulting and citizen participation.
- **Newsletter No 3.** Creating technology and industrial parks, potentials for their development in our pilot cities, and American experiences in this area.
- **Newsletter No 4.** Consulting activities in the area of housing and a strategic approach to technical assistance.
- **Newsletter No 5.** Restructuring of 2 municipal enterprises: ZOM (City Cleaning Company) and MZK (Bus Transportation Enterprise), and workshops in Ziębice (August '97 on technical assistance under the Pilot LGPP in Ziębice) and Krynica (September '97 on economic development in the S'decka Public Service City Zone).
- **Newsletter No 6.** Final evaluation of the program and conclusions from the conference closing the Pilot LGPP.

### ***Visual Communication***

The promotional Video *Information is Everything* presents Pilot LGPP assistance in the area of communication and citizen participation, focusing on Gliwice's accomplishments and successes in public communication.

One of the key technical areas in the Pilot LGPP program was communication and citizen participation. Assistance concentrated on advising gminas how to enhance communication both within gminas



and between gmina authorities and their citizens. Communication and citizen participation are issues that are relevant to the Pilot program's other consulting areas: housing, land management, economic development, etc. People realized that no matter what they are engaged in "being better informed makes people better citizens because they are able to make decisions on fact rather than on intuition or stories they may have heard"<sup>4</sup>

Our promotional video conveys the message that good civic communication can be developed only as a two-way street and decisions have to incorporate citizen input. In order to achieve such bi-directional communication in which citizens realize that governance depends on their own input and local officials are ready to accept it, both parties have to set a framework for cooperation, learn to listen to each other and respect everybody's opinions. Gliwice's example in the video shows successful cooperation between the city and citizens. It presents a new organizational unit within City Hall, Customer Service Office, which provides various services to citizens in a professional and friendly way with the goal of making city administration open and responsive to residents' needs.

### ***Conferences and Workshops***

Training courses, seminars and meetings are important vehicles for information distribution. Formal discussions and well structured presentations are essential for good communication and information exchange. Such meetings also allow participants an opportunity to discuss matters informally, to network and to team up with other parties. Local workshops focused on specific needs of individual pilot cities. Our aim was to present new and innovative methods for solving gminas' pressing problems and to get them publicized both internally (within gminas) and externally (throughout Poland). The following conferences and workshops were organized during the Pilot LGPP Program:

- *Strategy Modules Workshop* - January 1997 - Warsaw
- *Communication and Citizen Participation* - April 1997 - Gliwice
- *Technology Parks* - July 1997 - Gliwice
- *Housing Strategy* - October 1997 - Ostrow Wielkopolski
- *Agro-Industrial Park* - March 1997 - Kutno
- *Civic Communication* - June 1997 - Kutno
- *Tourism* - July 1997 - Sandomierz
- *Economic Development* - September 1997 - Krynica
- *Enterprise Financial Model* - October 1997 - Kraków
- *Capital Improvement Plan* - September 1997 Bielsko-Biala
- *Communication and Citizen Participation* - June 1997 - Zakopane
- *Summary of Technical Assistance Activities* - August 1997 - Ziębice
- *Close-out conference of the Pilot LGPP* - October 1997 - Warsaw

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Kathy Alison in the video 'Information is Everything.' Pilot LGPP 1997.